

WITCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL  
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**Witchford Parish Council**

Clerk: Mrs A Hodges, 88 West Fen Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 3AA  
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**Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017 at  
7.30 pm in St. Andrews Hall.**

**Present:** Mr I Allen (in the Chair), Mr I Brand, Mr R Braund, Mr I Boylett, Mr D Jackson, Mr G Jellicoe, Mrs R Lacey, Mr A Shaw

**In Attendance:** District Councillor Mr S Cheetham and Mr M Hugo

**Public Session**

Several member/s of the public was/were present.

16/280 Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Mr W Hunt, District Councillors Mr S Smith and from Mr H Palmer

16/281 There were no declarations of interest

16/282 The Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017 were approved and were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

**16/283 Information from District and County Councillors**

Cllr Cheetham gave a report on East Cambridgeshire District Council activities for the last month. There was meeting of the Full Council on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017. An error on the online planning portal – where an error in transition to new the system resulted in documents being unavailable online – has now been corrected. The existing local Council Tax reduction scheme will be continued for 2017-18. The Regulatory and Support Services Committee met on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017. The buildings of local interest register has been finalised. The Air Quality Annual Status Report 2016 was signed off – this shows that within East Cambridgeshire the statutory air quality objectives were not exceeded during the year 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. Preparatory and clearing works for the Ely southern bypass started in January, with construction work planned to start in March 2017 and completion in the spring of 2018. The cinema site at Downham Road is on track to be open in March 2017 with the Leisure Centre scheduled for March 2018.

Following a question from the Parish Council, Cllr Cheetham agreed to follow up the issue of flood risk at Barton Close with District Council officers.

**Local Plan**

16/284 The Parish Council discussed its response to the East Cambridgeshire District Council Further Draft Local Plan consultation. This was based on the comments raised at the Neighbourhood Plan meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Cllr Cheetham and Cllr Hugo were present for this discussion; they agreed to argue for the inclusion of infrastructure improvements for Witchford in the new Local Plan. In response to a request from the Parish Council they also agreed that as far as possible they would oppose speculative planning applications for housing on greenfield sites in Witchford that are not in the Local Plan housing allocations, but they are constrained by the National Planning Policy Framework requirements.

The Chairman advised that communications have been received from planning consultants confirming that the area of land north of Common Road will be submitted to the District Council for inclusion in the Local Plan. It is therefore possible to ask for this to be substituted for the land at Meadow Close. If residents wish to respond directly to the

District Council in support of this swap, they should refer to the new site as 'Land to the North of Common Road Witchford'.

The Chairman also read out an email from a resident and also a response from Cambridgeshire County Council to a Freedom of Information request from a resident about whether Cambridgeshire County Council Highways was aware of the traffic issues at Meadow Close (the resident had given their permission for this). The FOI response confirmed that highways officers had visited the site but not during peak hours.

The Parish Council **agreed** to request that Cambridgeshire County Council highways officers visit Manor Road/Meadow Close during peak hours to get a complete view of the traffic problems.

The Parish Council's comments that will be submitted to East Cambridgeshire District Council are:

*Witchford Parish Council formal response to East Cambridgeshire District Council Further Draft Local Plan consultation 12th January – 22nd February 2017*

*Policy 7.45 Witchford2: Infrastructure and Community Facilities*

*The Parish Council, responding to repeated demand from residents, urges that provision of a doctor's surgery in Witchford is critical and planning for this should be included in the Local Plan as one of the 'identified priority infrastructure and community facilities'.*

*Witchford Parish Council has recently (November 2016) carried out a village-wide survey of residents' views, and the need for a doctor's surgery was raised as a key concern by a majority of respondents.*

*'Improvements to pedestrian/cycle routes' should also include cycleway improvements at the Lancaster Way Business Park roundabout.*

*Witchford Parish Council considers that in order to gain material benefit for residents, the S106 funds from individual development sites throughout the village should be aggregated so that sufficient funding is available for major schemes, such as, for instance, a doctor's surgery or a roundabout on the A142 at the Common Road junction.*

*The Parish Council is of the view that the proposed housing allocations in Witchford will have a significant detrimental effect on educational, medical, public transport and highways services. The wording of Policy 7.45 Witchford2 should therefore be amended from 'the scale of contribution should be proportionate to the scale of development proposed' to 'the scale of contribution should be proportionate to the scale of the impact of the development on amenities and facilities in the village'.*

*Policy 7.45 Witchford3: Preferred Allocation Sites*

*Preferred housing allocation site WFD.H3 (between Meadow Close and Broadway) was considered by the Parish Council in consultation with residents during the District Council consultation on the Local Plan Call for Sites in July 2016. This site was ranked by the Parish Council as sixth out of eight possible sites in Witchford. The Parish Council's comments on the Call for Sites consultation were received by East Cambridgeshire District Council on 7th July 2016. The Parish Council is therefore most concerned that its views on the suitability of this site appear to have been disregarded by the District Council. The Parish Council reiterates that vehicular access to this site via Meadow Close is wholly inadequate.*

*Subsequent to the Call for Sites process the Parish Council has been advised that land north of Common Road Witchford will be made available for development. The Parish Council considers that this is a logical site for development in the village as it has the*

*potential to address a wide range of issues. This site could provide new highway access to Witchford Village College so ameliorating the current traffic issues on Manor Road and also through Main Street, potentially allow the relocation of educational facilities if appropriate, and would have less impact on neighbouring properties.*

*Witchford Parish Council therefore unanimously supports the deletion of site WFD.H3 between Meadow Close and Broadway and its replacement in the Local Plan with the site north of Common Road.*

*In conjunction with this, the Parish Council requests that the Witchford Village Development Envelope boundary is redrawn to exclude the land currently shown as WFD.H3 from the Development Envelope.*

*The Parish Council has received a considerable number of representations from Witchford residents in support of this proposal.*

*Policy LP3: The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside and EB007B Settlement Hierarchy document*

*The Parish Council questions the designation of Witchford as a 'large village'. At section 3.8.8 of the draft Local Plan a large village is described as containing 'a wide range of services and facilities to meet people's daily needs, including, normally, a primary school, doctor's surgery and a range of shops and services'. Although Witchford does have a population greater than 1500, it does not have a doctor's surgery or a wide range of shops*

*and services, nor does it have a good public transport service (buses now run only two-hourly at off-peak times and not at all on Sundays) and residents need to travel out of the village to meet their daily needs.*

*The Parish Council would therefore describe Witchford as a village with a large population but without sufficient services and amenities for that population, and certainly with insufficient services and amenities for any population growth.*

*The Parish Council therefore urges that housing allocations in Witchford should be accompanied by the provision in the Local Plan of identified, deliverable infrastructure and community facilities, to be funded by developer contributions that are proportionate to the impact of the development on those facilities.*

#### *7.45.5 Green Wedge*

*A sizeable area of land should be left undeveloped to preserve the existing 'green wedge' between the Lancaster Way Business Park and Witchford village to the north and south of Ely/Witchford Road. This should be designated as Local Green Space to ensure its protection from future development.*

*Policy LP28: Landscape and Built Environment Character, including Cathedral Views*

*The western boundary of this site as shown in the Further Draft Local Plan has been drawn to fit in with the old airfield runways and does not take into account the topography and landscape value of the area. The public bridleway to the west of the site is well used by residents and affords excellent views across to Ely Cathedral. Policy LP 28 in the Further Draft Local Plan specifically states: For the Ely area, and from any other area from which Ely Cathedral can be seen, no development will be permitted which impacts on either views of the Cathedral or on the general visual distinctiveness of Ely. The Parish Council considers that Ely.E2 should remain clear of the public bridleway and should follow the topography of the site, and that suitable and sufficient landscaping should be provided to mitigate against the reduction in value of this view to the Cathedral.*

*Witchford Parish Council's view is that employment allocation Ely E2 should be reduced in size with the boundary of the allocation redrawn towards Ely.*

*Policy LP31F: Non-residential development in the open countryside*

*The extension of Lancaster Way Business Park shown at Ely E2 is not commensurate with its rural location and does not comply with policy LP31F(d) which states: 'Proposals for non-residential developments in rural areas will be supported provided that...the development is of a size and scale commensurate with the proposed use and with the rural character of the location'.*

*Policy LP17: Creating a Sustainable, Efficient and Resilient Transport Network*

*Witchford Parish Council notes the statement 'any development that has severe transport implications will not be granted planning permission unless deliverable mitigation measures have been identified and arrangements secured for their implementation, which will make the development acceptable in transport terms'.*

*The Parish Council's view is that the proposed allocation Ely.E2 has severe transport implications for residents of Witchford wishing to access the A142 via the Lancaster Way Business Park roundabout (which is the predominant means of access to the A142 from Witchford). The Parish Council therefore considers that this extension to the Lancaster Way Business Park should be removed from the Local Plan unless deliverable mitigation measures (such as direct access onto the A10) are in place.*

## **Budget**

- 16/285 The Parish Council agreed to apply the £8676 CIL funds received to date to the cost of Common Road play area and to release the balance from 'play area reserve' into a new 'amenity reserve'. The reasoning for this is that East Cambridgeshire District Council can demand that the CIL funds are returned by the Parish Council if they are not spent within five years.
- 16/286 The Parish Council reviewed two quotations for the printing and delivery of the monthly Minutes and agreed to continue with The Witchfordian as this quotation was considerably less than the other. Cllr Braund was authorised to speak to the Witchfordian editor about whether the timing of the Parish Council Minutes causes problems for producing the magazine on time.

## **Committees**

- 16/287 Cllr Allen Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee gave a report from the 18<sup>th</sup> 2017 meeting. The Local Plan was discussed. A steering group of approximately 4 – 5 people including volunteers from the community needs to be set up to progress the Neighbourhood Plan; Cllr Shaw will produce a poster for the next Committee meeting promoting the positives about the Neighbourhood Plan process for Witchford. Cllr Westwell gave an update from the Education Group; the County Council Education Officer has advised that primary school infrastructure will be included in the new County Council 5-year plan to be discussed by the County Council in February.
- 16/288 Cllr Braund Chairman of Traffic Management Committee gave a report from the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 meeting. This had discussed the ATC results, the LHI panel interview on 6<sup>th</sup> February, planning conditions covering school bus routes through the village, the traffic issues list and the summary of annual Speedwatch data. The Committee had contacted Cambridgeshire County Council about removing the barrier on footpath No5 between Meadow Close and Manor Court Road and they have no objections. Cllr Braund met a representative of Sanctuary Housing on site on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to discuss the possible removal of the barrier on the footway between Manor Close and Manor Court Road.

### Communications

- 16/289 The Parish Council agreed to issue a press release on the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire results. This will be sent to a range of local newspapers, online, radio and tv news providers.
- 16/290 Cllr Shaw gave the Parish Council an update on the progress of the new Parish Council website. The domain has been registered and the website has been set up, and is now under construction. Documents will be uploaded to a GoogleCloud drive. The Clerk advised that there is a problem with the existing website and all new documents are currently having to be stored under 'Planning:District Council Local Plan review'.

### Community

- 16/291 Play areas:
- i) the Bedwell Hey Lane play area has been inspected. Cllr Boylett has completed the play area training and is now qualified to carry out the weekly inspections.
  - ii) the new play equipment at Common Road is due to be installed on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> February. The Parish Council will see if it is possible to sell the climbing net, as this is relatively new.
  - iii) the Parish Council agreed that wood from the old play equipment at Common Road should be re-purposed as seating for Millennium Wood. The Parish Council also agreed to purchase up to 10 more bags of bark for the Common Road play area should they be needed, in addition to the 10 bags already ordered.
- 16/292 The Parish Council deferred a decision on whether to install a new streetlight at Barton Close.
- 16/293 The Parish Council agreed to install a new dog waste bin at the end of Bedwell Hey Lane.
- 16/294 The Parish Council agreed to ask the District Council if they will take over the litter bin at Orton Green.
- 16/295 The bench on the grass area by the village sign will shortly be removed and replaced by the new memorial bench for Mrs Bromley-Allen. The old bench will be refurbished and repositioned elsewhere in the village. The Parish Council approved expenditure on incidental items up to £50 for this.

### Planning

- 16/296 The Parish Council adopted a 'planning pre-application discussion' policy.
- 16/297 17/00024/FUL  
Front and Rear Dwelling Extension  
185 Main Street
- No objections
- 17/00043/PDR  
Carport infill  
22 Granary End
- No objections

### Correspondence and actions:

- 16/298 i) The Parish Council noted the activity and correspondence log for January 2017.

16/299 **Councillor Reports:**

Grasscutting – the hedge and ditch at Manor Road have been flailed

Streetlights – light CCC 5 is flickering and will be reported

Open Spaces

The Parish Council thanked Greenwood Tree Surgery for supplying wood chippings for spreading on paths in Sandpit Drove wood.

The waymark post on Old Baulk Fen Drove has been damaged and will be reinstated.

The tree pruning at Elm Close has been carried out.

No response has been received from local farmers to the offer of 3 inch limestone for filling holes on droves.

The Open Spaces Group has laid 18m of hedge in the Old Recreation Ground.

Community

There is an ongoing problem with litter on the boundary of the College and Sandpit Drove; the Parish Council will try to set up a liaison meeting with the College.

The Parish Council has reports of an increasing rat problem on the north side of the village since the Field End site has been cleared.

Sanctuary Housing is aware of the drainage issue in the car park off Manor Court Road; they are currently taking no action.

A contractor for Cambridgeshire County Council Highways has cleared lumps in the footways that have been causing a hazard.

The PCSO has made a site visit to look at the graffiti in the village.

The Parish Council has referred complaints about lorries leaving the Field End development site via Victoria Green to the District Council planning officer.

The Parish Council will contact BT about the light in the phone box which is out.

There is a problem with dog waste on byway No7 (New Road); the Parish Council asks dog owners to be responsible and clear up after their dogs anywhere in the village.

The Parish Council authorised Cllr Jellicoe to meet with the District Council waste officer to discuss flytipping, litter picking and general waste issues in the parish area.

Wood – tree thinning work has started at the Millennium Wood.

16/300 **Finance**

The Clerk's timesheet for January 2017 and the bank reconciliation as at 30<sup>th</sup> December 2016 were noted and the cheques on schedule of cheques were approved and signed.

16/301 The next Parish Council meeting is on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The next Traffic Management Committee meeting is on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and the next Neighbourhood Plan Committee meeting is on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

Signed: ..... Chairman

Date: .....